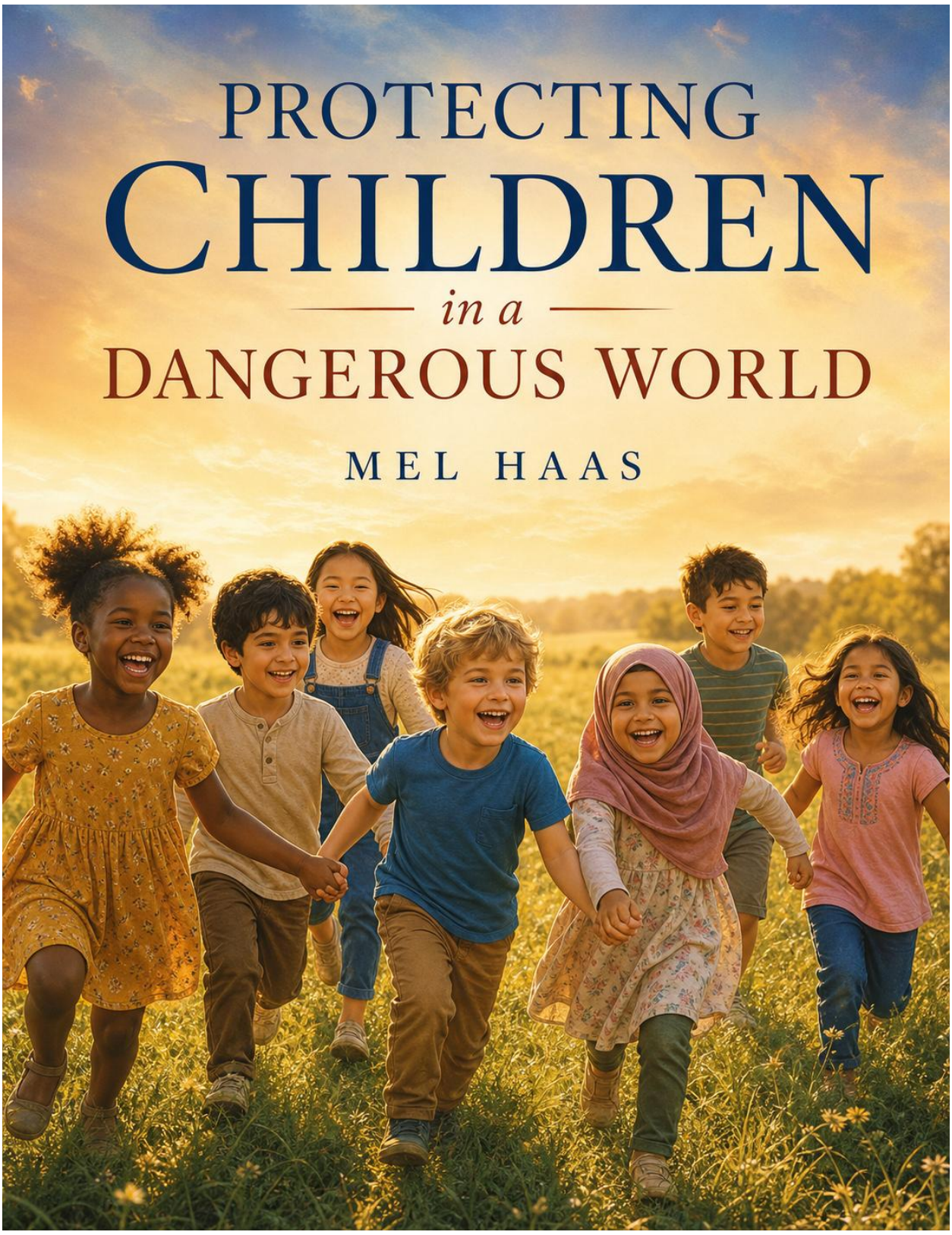
PROTECTING
CHILDREN
in a
DANGEROUS WORLD
MEL HAAS

Protecting Children in a Dangerous World

A Moral Conversation for Grandparents and Great-Grandparents

Mel Haas and Perplexity Pro

For my six children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren — and for every child on this earth who deserves to live, to grow, and to know they are loved.

The children are not our children to keep. They are our children to free.

"The opposite of love is not hate — it is indifference.
Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Holocaust Survivor

Contents

A Great-Grandparent's Confession 6

The Most Important Legacy 8

What this book is 9

Who this is written for 10

What religion teaches 12

What philosophy teaches 13

What science teaches 14

The Numbers We Do Not Want to See 15

The global picture 16

- Gaza 16
- Ukraine 17
- The whole world 17

How We Learn to Look Away 18

The collapse of compassion 19

Propaganda and the art of dehumanization 20

The echo chamber and the managed image 21

The Anatomy of Apathy 21

The bystander effect 22

Pluralistic ignorance 23

The "dirty hands" argument 25

The Evil We Choose Not to Name 25

What leaders are doing 27

What support means 28

Children Under Fire 29

Gaza: The baby born into war 29

Ukraine: A school in the crosshairs 30

Sudan: The hunger siege 31

Yemen: The child soldiers and the bombings 31

United States: The Obscenity of Our Indifference 32

The Grandparent's Moral Authority 38

The late-life moral awakening 39

The particular responsibility of American grandparents 40

Faith, Conscience, and Courage in Late Life 41

The prophetic tradition 42

Christian witness 43

For secular grandparents 44

Moral courage in late life 44

Speaking Across the Divide 45

Start with what we share 46

Ask questions, don't deliver verdicts.....47

Acknowledge their fears 47

Give people a way out without humiliation..... 48

Small groups, over time 49

What We Can Do 49

Actions you can do from your chair.....50

Actions you can do with others..... 51

Vote as if children's lives depend on it 53

A Promise to the Children.....53

Silence Is Not Neutral: An Invitation to Speak Together.....56

Why we must not speak alone.....57

A global living room: CivicGood.....58

How to join CivicGood 58

Why joining matters 62

A final personal word.....63

A Great-Grandparent's Confession

I am a great-grandparent. I have lived long enough to watch three generations grow from infants to people who themselves bring new life into the world. I have changed diapers and dried tears. I have read bedtime stories and watched school plays. I have worried about fevers, consoled broken hearts, and felt a pride so overwhelming that it has no adequate English word.

And I am astonished — heartbroken, honestly — that I live in a world where children are being slaughtered, starved, and shot while many of the people around me go about their days without raising a word of protest.

Not strangers. People I know. People who love their own grandchildren extravagantly. People who would throw themselves in front of a car to protect the child of a neighbor. And yet these same people support, excuse, or simply remain silent about leaders who rain bombs on hospitals where children sleep, who allow aid convoys carrying food for starving infants to rot at checkpoints, who deliberately target schools as instruments of war.

This book is my attempt to understand that contradiction — and to speak to the grandparents and great-grandparents who feel what I feel but have not yet found a way to say it aloud.

I am not a philosopher, though I have read philosophy. I am not a politician, though I have spent a lifetime in civic engagement. I am a parent, a grandparent, a great-grandparent, a human being who believes that protecting children is the most basic moral obligation any of us has.

I write this for the residents of continuing care retirement communities across America who shuffle past the terrible news at breakfast. I write this for the grandmothers who adore their grandchildren and somehow still vote for the men who are killing someone else's. I write this for the grandfathers who built careers opposing tyranny and cannot quite see that the logic of cruelty does not change its nature depending on whose flag it flies under.

And I write this in love — because only love, not rage, can actually change another person's heart. Let us begin.

The Most Important Legacy

Why grandparents must speak now

We have raised six children. We have six grandchildren. We have three great-grandchildren. If you are reading this book, you probably have your own count — a number you hold close, a set of faces that appear unbidden when you close your eyes.

Ask yourself: *What is your most important legacy?*

Not the money you may leave. Not the house. Not even the values you tried to teach. The most important legacy of a human life is the living human beings who continue after you — who carry your love forward, who make their own children and their children's children, who extend in unbroken biological and spiritual chain into a future you will never see but which you helped make possible. This is not a sentimental claim. It is almost certainly the deepest truth most of us will ever live.

Now ask yourself a second question: If children are the most important legacy of human existence — the most irreplaceable, the most precious, the most sacred thing we know — what does it mean that children are being killed in record numbers, right now, in our lifetimes, with the support or indifference of millions of otherwise decent people?

What does it mean that a grandparent can weep at a grandchild's kindergarten graduation on a Saturday and on Sunday support a leader who is bombing kindergartens on the other side of the world?

What does it mean that good people — religious people, people who carry pictures of grandchildren in their wallets — can absorb the news that children are starving to death, shot by snipers, buried under rubble, and not rise from their chairs?

These are not rhetorical questions. They are the questions this book is built to explore — honestly, compassionately, and without pretending they have easy answers.

What this book is

This is a moral conversation, not a political argument. I am not primarily interested in parties, elections, or ideological alignment. I am interested in one question: *How can people who love their own children and grandchildren remain indifferent to the slaughter of someone else's?*

I will draw on psychology, philosophy, theology, and the plain hard evidence of what is actually happening to children in conflict zones around the world. I will ask you to sit with the

uncomfortable fact that none of us is fully innocent — that our votes, our silence, our media habits all form part of the moral environment in which these deaths become possible.

And I will offer a path forward — not a path of guilt and paralysis, but of awakening and action, grounded in the love for children that most grandparents carry at the core of their being.

Who this is written for

I am writing primarily for older Americans — people like the residents of my continuing care retirement community — who are old enough to remember when the protection of children from slaughter was considered beyond political debate.

I am writing for people who are conflicted — who love a leader but feel an uneasy stirring when they see the images from conflict zones. Who have absorbed enough politically convenient framing to explain away the deaths, but who cannot quite silence the part of them that was once a child, that once held a newborn.

And I am writing for anyone who believes, as I do, that the moral authority of grandparents and great-grandparents — the authority that comes from having created and sustained life — is one of the most powerful and most underused moral resources in our democracy. We have earned something younger people have not yet earned: the right to speak from a lifetime of love. Let us use it.

The Sacredness of Children

What every great tradition has always known *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." — Matthew 19:14*

There is something so obvious, so universally felt, that it should not need to be argued: children are sacred. Not merely people-in-waiting, not merely the next generation of workers and consumers. Children are the living embodiment of hope, of

innocence, of the future itself. To harm a child is not merely to harm a person — it is to attack the very possibility of the future.

Every major moral tradition in human history has recognized this. Not as a recent liberal sentiment, not as a Western imposition, but as one of the oldest and deepest moral intuitions of our species.

What religion teaches

In the Hebrew Bible, children are called a "heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). The Torah commands, above almost all else, the protection of the most vulnerable — and children are the most vulnerable. The prophets of Israel reserved their most devastating condemnation for those who harmed children: the powerful who ground the faces of the poor while their children starved.

In the Christian tradition, Jesus is unambiguous. "If anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). This is not gentle language. Jesus does not say it would be unfortunate or understandable given the security situation. He says it would be better for the perpetrator never to have been born.

Islam is equally clear. The Quran explicitly condemns the killing of children and forbids harming those who cannot defend themselves. The Prophet Muhammad specifically instructed his armies never to kill women, children, or the elderly. Buddhism teaches that all beings who suffer deserve our compassion — and no being suffers more helplessly than a child caught in war. Hinduism understands the child as a soul in a sacred phase of development, protected by dharma.

Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, the indigenous traditions of every inhabited continent — all of them, without exception, place the protection of children among the highest of moral obligations. This is not a coincidence. It is wisdom earned over millennia of human experience.

What philosophy teaches

Beyond religion, the great philosophical traditions converge on the same conclusion. Immanuel Kant's "categorical imperative" asks: act only according to principles you would be willing to see universalized for all of humanity. Would you accept a world where it was a universal rule that children could be bombed, starved, or shot when their government was inconvenient? No person of

sound mind would. Therefore, by Kant's logic, harming children is absolutely prohibited.

Utilitarian philosophy, associated with John Stuart Mill, asks us to calculate the greatest good for the greatest number. The suffering of a child is among the most morally weighted suffering possible. Children are disproportionately vulnerable; they did not choose the conflict, cannot defend themselves, cannot negotiate, cannot flee effectively. Any calculation that produces the death of a child as an acceptable outcome is a corrupted calculation.

Mill himself, speaking at St. Andrews University in 1867, delivered perhaps the most important sentence for our purposes:

> *'Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.'*

This sentence has echoed through history for more than 150 years. It is, in four words, the moral challenge of our moment: look on and do nothing. That is what apathy and indifference are. Not neutrality. Active assistance to the bad men who need only our silence to proceed.

What science teaches

Modern neuroscience and developmental psychology add a dimension to what religion and philosophy have long known: children's brains are uniquely vulnerable to violence. A child who experiences or witnesses violence does not simply have a bad memory — their developing brain is literally shaped differently. The neural architecture of stress, fear, and trauma is laid down in the earliest years of life, and the damage is often permanent.

Societies that destroy children's safety are not just killing individuals. They are poisoning the wells of human flourishing for generations to come. The damage reverberates for decades, in mental health crises, in broken families, in communities that cannot trust and cannot heal.

The Numbers We Do Not Want to See

What is actually happening to children right now

> *"The year 2024 marked a devastating new record. Behind these numbers are the shattered stories, dreams, and futures of 22,495 children, each of them profoundly affected by war." — Virginia Gamba, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, June 2025*

One of the most important things I can do in this book is simply tell you the numbers. Not to overwhelm you — though they are overwhelming. Not to paralyze you — though they should disturb your sleep. But because one of the primary tools of apathy is not knowing, or half-knowing, or knowing and then allowing the knowing to fade into the background noise of a busy life.

These numbers are current. They come from the United Nations, UNICEF, and Save the Children — organizations with no interest in exaggeration, and whose verification processes are, if anything, slow and conservative, meaning the true numbers are likely higher than reported.

The global picture

According to the United Nations, an average of 78 children per day suffered grave violations in 2024 — the worst year on record.

Let that sink in. Not 78 soldiers. Seventy-eight children, every day, suffering what the United Nations defines as "grave violations" — the most serious category of harm it tracks.

Gaza

Children in Gaza are more likely to die from blast injuries than adults. They are smaller. Their skulls are thinner. They do not

survive what adults sometimes do. And at least 132,000 children under five face death not from bombs but from the deliberate restriction of food — babies dying because trucks carrying formula and therapeutic food are not allowed through.

Ukraine

Thousands of Ukrainian children have also been taken to Russia — removed from their families, placed in Russian schools and families, raised to forget they were Ukrainian. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for the Russian officials responsible for this practice, calling it what it is: a war crime.

The whole world

Globally, an estimated 118 million children were pushed into hunger in 2025, and recent analysis by Save the Children finds that about 63 million of them — more than half — were driven into hunger primarily by conflict rather than by economic, climatic, or other factors. According to UN-backed food security reporting, over 295 million people across 53 countries faced high levels of acute food insecurity, with conflict identified as the leading driver in many of these crises. In 20 conflict-affected countries, Save the Children's review of the latest data found that more than one in three children under five — approximately 44 million — are

stunted, meaning their physical and cognitive development has been permanently damaged by chronic malnutrition.

The numbers are not statistics. Each one is a child. Each one has a name, a face, a family that loved them. Each one was — before the bomb, before the bullet, before the week without food — someone's irreplaceable legacy.

How We Learn to Look Away

The psychology of not seeing

> *"Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, but indifference between life and death." — Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate*

Elie Wiesel survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald. He lost his family. He watched children die. And in the decades he spent bearing witness to the worst that human beings can do to one another, he concluded that startled the world: the greatest evil is not the cruelty of the perpetrators. It is the indifference of the bystanders. This is a hard teaching. It is easier to focus our moral attention on the obvious villains — the generals, the politicians, the soldiers

who pull triggers or press launch buttons. They are clearly guilty. But Wiesel is telling us something more difficult: that the millions who watched and said nothing, who knew and did nothing, who felt and did nothing — they were also part of the machinery of atrocity.

The collapse of compassion

Psychologists have discovered what they call "psychic numbing" — the well-documented fact that our moral response to mass suffering does not scale with the numbers. When we hear that one child has died, we feel grief. When we hear that 20,000 children have died, we feel… less. We cannot feel 20,000 times the grief we felt for one. Our emotional systems simply do not work that way.

Paul Slovic, one of the world's leading researchers on decision-making and compassion, has shown in dozens of experiments that as the number of victims increases, individual compassion actually decreases. He calls this "the collapse of compassion." We must learn to bring the numbers back down to one — to look at one child, one face, one story — and refuse to let scale excuse us from feeling.

Propaganda and the art of dehumanization

When people look at the psychological conditions that made the Holocaust possible, they find one crucial precondition above all others: the systematic dehumanization of the victims. The Jews of Europe were not, in the propaganda of the Nazi state, human children and parents and grandparents. They were a "problem," a "disease," a "threat." Once that mental step was taken, their suffering became abstract, their deaths a matter of policy rather than tragedy.

The same mechanism is at work today. Children in Gaza are described not as children but as potential future threats, as "human shields," as unfortunate but unavoidable collateral in a necessary security operation. Children in Sudan are barely described at all — their deaths are too politically inconvenient for any major power to amplify. Language matters enormously. "Regrettable but necessary" preserves the speaker's self-image while making the deaths acceptable. These are not accidents of language. They are the carefully constructed grammar of moral evasion.

The echo chamber and the managed image

Many of the people who support leaders responsible for the deaths of children do not see the images of those deaths. The information ecosystem of the 21st century allows people to construct a reality in which the deaths simply do not appear, or appear only in forms that make them seem justified. A person who consumes only certain partisan media channels does not receive the same information as a person who reads Médecins Sans Frontières reports, UNICEF bulletins, and the firsthand dispatches of journalists on the ground. The echo chamber does not merely tell them different interpretations of the same facts. It provides literally different facts — or the absence of facts. The moral challenge is to actively seek out the information that our preferred media sources are not showing us — and to ask ourselves why they are not showing it.

The Anatomy of Apathy

Why good people do nothing

> *"Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing. He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be*

committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject." — John Stuart Mill, 1867

This chapter is about the specific psychological architecture of apathy — the machinery by which otherwise good people become instruments of evil through their inaction.

These are the people in your dining room. Good people. People who love grandchildren. People who go to church and give to charity and help their neighbors when they are sick. And yet, through their apathy and their silence, they are helping to sustain a world in which children die.

The bystander effect

In 1964, Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death outside her apartment building in New York while, according to early reports, neighbors heard her screams and did nothing. The case led psychologists John Darley and Bibb Latané to design a series of experiments revealing what is now called the bystander effect: the more people are present in a situation where someone needs help, the less likely any individual is to help.

This happens not because people become cruel in groups, but because each person assumes that someone else will act — that someone else bears the responsibility. The bystander effect operates powerfully in the face of distant atrocity. There are 8 billion people in the world. Surely someone else is taking care of this. There are governments, aid organizations, the United Nations. **And so every bystander assumes the other bystanders will act. No one acts. The atrocity continues.**

Pluralistic ignorance

Related to the bystander effect is a phenomenon called pluralistic ignorance — the situation in which everyone in a group privately believes something but publicly conforms to a different norm, assuming incorrectly that they are alone in their private belief.

At your retirement community — at mine — there are almost certainly many residents who are privately troubled by the deaths of children in conflict zones. But they look around at the dining room and see everyone else eating calmly, talking about the weather, watching the game. No one else seems troubled. And so they conclude — incorrectly — that they are alone in their unease. And they go back to their soup. The person across the table is having exactly the same experience. Two people eating soup in

comfortable silence, each one privately troubled, each one assuming the other is not. This is why speaking is so important: one voice breaks the silence that is making every other voice feel alone.

Identity protection

Perhaps the most powerful barrier to moral awakening is identity protection. When a person has deeply invested their sense of self in a political leader — when supporting a particular figure has become part of who they are — any criticism of that leader is experienced not as political disagreement but as a personal attack.

The human brain processes threats to our social identity in the same regions that process physical threats. The person who tells you that the leader you love is causing children to die is not, to your unconscious brain, offering you information. They are attacking you. And you respond to an attack not by weighing evidence but by defending yourself. This is why shaming and accusing are such ineffective tools for changing minds. Not because they are wrong, but because they produce exactly the wrong neurological response: defensiveness, not reflection.

The "dirty hands" argument

Many supporters of leaders associated with children's deaths are making a specific argument: it is terrible, but the alternative would be worse. This is what philosophers call the "problem of dirty hands" — the question of whether political leaders are ever justified in committing immoral acts to protect their people.

But the dirty-hands argument has limits. It requires that the harm being done be genuinely proportionate to the harm being prevented, be the minimum harm necessary, and actually work. When a military campaign kills thousands of children and has produced no demonstrable increase in security, when the leaders conducting it have no clear plan for what comes after — the dirty hands argument has collapsed. It has become a justification not for hard but necessary choices, but for crimes. And those who remain silent about it are part of the justification.

The Evil We Choose Not to Name

Leaders, complicity, and the blood on all our hands

> *"Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act." —*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German Lutheran pastor and anti-Nazi dissident, executed by the Nazis in April 1945

Dietrich Bonhoeffer watched the Nazi regime rise to power with the explicit support of much of the German church. He watched fellow pastors rationalize, accommodate, and eventually celebrate a regime that was murdering Jewish people and others. He watched good Christians find reasons to be silent.

He was eventually arrested for his role in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler and executed in a concentration camp just two weeks before it was liberated by Allied forces. Before his death, he wrote some of the most penetrating moral theology of the twentieth century. And his most-quoted sentence is the one above: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil."

This chapter is about what that means for us, right now, in 2026, as citizens, grandparents, and great-grandparents living in democracies that we have the power to end or substantially reduce the slaughter of children — but who have chosen, so far, not to use that power.

What leaders are doing

I want to be direct. The government of Israel, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has conducted a military campaign in Gaza that has killed thousands of children. Hospitals, schools, and refugee camps have been repeatedly struck. Humanitarian aid has been blocked while children died of malnutrition. The UN Secretary-General, the World Health Organization, Save the Children, UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières, and virtually every independent humanitarian organization in the world have documented these facts and called them grave violations of international humanitarian law.

The government of Russia, under President Vladimir Putin, has conducted a war against Ukraine that has killed hundreds of children, systematically bombed schools and hospitals, and removed thousands of Ukrainian children from their families to be placed in Russian institutions and homes — an act for which the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Putin, calling it a war crime.

Other governments — including some backed by American policy and American weapons — are conducting wars in Sudan, Yemen, and elsewhere where children are dying in numbers that, if they

occurred in Western Europe or America, would produce global outcry. This is not partisan opinion. These are the documented findings of institutions established specifically to monitor such things without ideological bias.

What support means

Support for a leader does not mean you support everything they do. Of course it does not. But support does carry moral weight. When you vote for a leader, donate to their campaign, defend them in conversation, or dismiss credible evidence of atrocities they are committing or enabling — you are not a neutral bystander. You are, in some measure, part of the system that sustains what they are doing.

John Stuart Mill put it precisely: "He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject." Wrong committed in his name. With the means which he helps to supply. This is the moral situation of every American citizen right now. American weapons, American diplomatic support, American tax dollars are among "the means" being supplied to multiple conflicts in which

children are being killed. And our silence has been taken, by every government involved, as permission to continue.

Children Under Fire

Human stories from Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and Yemen

> *"What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander." — Elie Wiesel*

Statistics can numb. Stories can wake us up. This chapter offers human stories from the conflicts currently killing children in the largest numbers. The situations described are documented and real, drawn from verified accounts in UN and humanitarian reports. I invite you to read each one slowly — and to keep a grandchild's or great-grandchild's face in your mind as you do.

Gaza: The baby born into war

Imagine a baby girl born in October 2023 in Gaza City. Her mother had planned to give birth at a major hospital — the same one where, decades before, the mother herself was born. But the hospital was under bombardment. The family fled south, then fled again, and again, following each new evacuation order, carrying only what they could hold.

The baby was born healthy. She nursed. She slept in her mother's arms while artillery shook the building. By six months old, she had experienced more displacement than most adults experience in a lifetime. We cannot know if she survived. But she is one of more than 1,009 documented infants under one year of age killed in Gaza during the war — or she is among those who, so far, have not been. Each of them as irreplaceable as any of our own grandchildren.

Ukraine: A school in the crosshairs

In a city in eastern Ukraine, children attended school in an ordinary yellow building with murals painted on the wall by the third graders. Murals of sunflowers and blue skies and cats — the enduring images of a country at peace with its own beauty.

Then a missile struck. Children were killed in the rubble. The teacher who had taught mathematics there for decades survived, but her classroom was destroyed. Across Ukraine, since February 2022, more than 2,285 children have been officially documented as wounded and 733 killed — the equivalent of 150 classrooms of children. And the pace has accelerated: in April 2025 alone, 97 children were killed or maimed in a single month.

Sudan: The hunger siege

In Al Fasher, in the Darfur region of Sudan, approximately 130,000 children are trapped inside a city under siege. Cut off from humanitarian aid for more than 16 months. Inside, children are dying of malnutrition at a rate that has overwhelmed the few functioning medical facilities.

Malnutrition at this level is not simply being hungry. A child's muscles waste. Brain development is permanently impaired. The immune system collapses, so they die not only of starvation but of diseases a healthy child would easily survive. Sudan's civil war receives a fraction of the coverage of Gaza or Ukraine. There are no dramatic videos, no political debate about who is right. There is only the slow, grinding, unseen death of children in a country the rest of the world has largely chosen to ignore. Elie Wiesel taught us that the silence of the bystander hurts the victim as much as the cruelty of the oppressor. In Sudan, the world is almost entirely silent. And children are dying in the silence.

Yemen: The child soldiers and the bombings

Yemen's decade-long civil war, enabled by Saudi-led airstrikes with weapons sold by the United States and other democracies,

has produced what the UN called "the world's worst humanitarian crisis." Thousands of children have been killed in airstrikes. Tens of thousands more have been recruited or conscripted as soldiers by armed factions — children as young as ten carrying rifles they can barely lift. A child who has seen his family killed has few other options. He becomes a soldier. He becomes a target. And the cycle of violence that was begun by adults — enabled by other adults thousands of miles away — continues on through the bodies and souls of children.

United States: The Obscenity of Our Indifference

If Gaza and Ukraine expose the immediate violence of war against children, Sudan, Yemen, and the United States reveal a harder truth: children can be destroyed not only by bombs and bullets, but also by hunger, displacement, disease, deprivation, and the deliberate refusal of adults to care enough to act. The methods, the flags, and the rhetoric differ, but the moral pattern remains the same. Children are made to bear costs that no child should ever be asked to bear.

In mid-2026, the United States conducted airstrikes against Iran, resulting in significant civilian casualties including children. Israel, with continuing American diplomatic and material support, extended military operations into Lebanon, adding to the toll of children killed.

In Sudan, the suffering of children has reached catastrophic proportions. UNICEF and the United Nations have warned that conflict, mass displacement, collapsing health services, acute hunger, and blocked or inadequate aid are driving a child emergency of staggering scale, with acute malnutrition reaching catastrophic levels in parts of the country. This is not a temporary byproduct of war. It is a prolonged assault on childhood itself, leaving children exposed to injury, disease, hunger, interrupted schooling, and lifelong trauma.

In Yemen, the story is one of normalized disaster. After years of conflict and economic collapse, children continue to suffer extreme hunger, weakened health systems, unsafe water, displacement, and preventable death. The United Nations reported that one in two Yemeni children under five is malnourished, including more than 540,000 girls and boys who are severely and acutely malnourished, a condition that is agonizing, life-threatening, and entirely preventable. When the world grows used to such suffering, indifference becomes part of the machinery that keeps it going.

The United States belongs in this chapter not because its harms are identical to Sudan or Yemen, but because they are morally linked. My book: **Breaking Tomorrow: How America Destroys Its Children Before They Start School** documents how American children are broken early by hunger, unstable housing, untreated illness, chronic stress, underfunded schools, and public policies that make deprivation more likely rather than less. It argues that poverty damages brain development, weakens learning, intensifies emotional distress, and makes the constitutional promise of education impossible to fulfill for millions of children. In America, the violence is often slower, bureaucratic,

and disguised as policy, but for the child living inside it, the damage is no less real.

Disregard operates as a form of destruction. A child does not need to be hated in order to be ruined. A child needs only to be left in a system where prenatal malnutrition, family instability, hunger, mold, untreated depression, racial bias, and school neglect are allowed to accumulate unchecked. The result is not accidental. It is predictable, measurable, and repeatedly documented.

This is also why apathy matters so much when nations move toward new violence, including an attack on Iran. Public indifference lowers the moral threshold for escalation. When people have trained themselves to look away from dead and starving children in Gaza, displaced children in Ukraine, bombarded children in Sudan, and wasted children in Yemen, they become easier to recruit into the next round of militarized "necessity." Apathy is never merely passive. It prepares the conscience to accept what should have been resisted.

The same indifference helps explain the danger of our disregard toward Donald Trump, Project 2025, Agenda47, and MAGA politics. These movements and policy agendas threaten children through cuts to food assistance, restrictions on healthcare, attacks

on Head Start, diminished support for poor families, and a governing ethos that treats vulnerability as weakness and need as failure. The harms fall first on poor children, immigrant children, disabled children, and children already living on the edge of survival. But they do not stop there. When a major political movement normalizes cruelty, mocks compassion, and treats truth as disposable, it harms the moral environment in which all children must grow.

Trumpism's danger to children is not only legislative. It is cultural. It teaches that dominance is admirable, that empathy is naïve, that outsiders are expendable, and that institutions designed to protect the weak are suspect or corrupt. Those lessons do not stay inside campaigns. They enter schools, congregations, media habits, family talk, and public policy. They shape how a nation speaks about migrant children, poor children, Palestinian children, Ukrainian children, Sudanese children, Yemeni children, and even its own hungry children.

Project 2025 and Agenda47 intensify this threat because they seek not merely to express resentment but to embed it in government. Child hunger, reduced healthcare access, unstable housing, educational decline, and family stress become more likely when support systems are cut, and poverty is treated as a

personal defect rather than a social failure. If these priorities dominate national policy, the result will not be abstract ideological victory. The result will be children who eat less, learn less, trust less, hope less, and suffer more.

The world's children are linked by more than sympathy. They are linked by systems of power, by money, by weapons, by media narratives, by policy choices, and by whether ordinary adults decide to notice or to look away. A hungry child in Mississippi and a hungry child in Yemen live in different political worlds, but both are injured by adult decisions that place ideology, power, and convenience above their survival. A displaced child in Sudan and a frightened child in a mold-infested American apartment are not suffering in the same way, but both are casualties of public arrangements that powerful people have chosen not to change.

That is why we must reject the temptation to separate these crises into disconnected categories. War there, policy here. Bombing there, bureaucracy here. Famine there, poverty here. Such distinctions may matter for analysis, but they must not become excuses for moral fragmentation. The deeper truth is simpler and harder: wherever children are knowingly sacrificed for power, profit, ideology, or indifference, evil is at work.

Summary

Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, Ukraine, Iran, and the United States do not face identical crises, but they reveal a single human failure: adults repeatedly allow children to be crushed when protecting them would require courage, sacrifice, and public resistance. Whether the instrument is bombing, siege, starvation, displacement, racist neglect, or social policy dressed up as reform, the underlying sin is the same — indifference to the suffering of the young. Once we understand that, we lose the right to call our silence neutrality. It becomes complicity.

The Grandparent's Moral Authority

Why our voice is uniquely powerful — and why we must use it

I want to make a case for something that may seem counterintuitive: that old people — specifically grandparents and great-grandparents — have a unique and largely unused moral authority in our society. Not cultural power or economic power or institutional power. Moral authority — the authority that comes from having lived a long life, from having made sacrifices for the next generation, from having loved children enough to give years of your life to raising them.

A grandparent or great-grandparent who stands up and says "I have raised children and grandchildren, and I cannot bear to live in a world where children are slaughtered and starved while we say nothing" is not making a political argument. They are bearing witness from a life of love. No one can accuse them of being naive about parenthood — they have done it, often multiple times. No one can accuse them of being sentimental about children's vulnerability — they have watched children through illness, through accidents, through the terrible learning processes of becoming human.

The late-life moral awakening

There is something that happens to many people in later life that younger people do not always anticipate: the gradual loosening of the identity investments and tribal loyalties that governed middle life. The need to protect the tribe, to defend the party, to maintain alliances — these needs diminish as we age. What remains is the deeper bedrock: what do I actually believe? What have I lived for? What do I want to be able to say when I look back?

Many people in their seventies, eighties, and nineties find themselves, paradoxically, freer to speak the truth than they were at forty. They have less to lose. They are closer to the final

accounting. And they find that what they actually believe, at the core, is simpler and more radical than what they have spent their life performing. I believe that many grandparents, if they allowed themselves to look directly at what is happening to children in the world right now, would feel something they have not felt since they were young idealists: genuine moral outrage, untempered by the compromises of working life.

The particular responsibility of American grandparents

American grandparents have a particular responsibility that grandparents in many other countries do not share. We live in the world's most powerful democracy, the country that manufactures and sells more weapons than any other, the country whose diplomatic support is essential for any major military campaign to continue without international consequence. American weapons are in Gaza. American diplomatic vetoes at the UN Security Council have protected governments conducting campaigns in which children die.

This is not a reason for guilt that paralyzes. It is a reason for responsibility that motivates. If American citizens have, as citizens of the world's most powerful democracy, more ability than most

people on earth to affect these outcomes — then American citizens have more responsibility than most people on earth to use that ability. And among American citizens, grandparents, and great-grandparents — people who vote in high numbers, who have community standing, who have earned the right to speak about children — have a particular role to play.

Faith, Conscience, and Courage in Late Life

What our traditions demand of us now

> *"There is one right I would not grant anyone — the right to be indifferent." — Elie Wiesel*

Most of the grandparents and great-grandparents I know are people of faith — or people with a deep moral framework shaped by decades of ethical reflection. They have sat through sermons about the Good Samaritan. They have read the Hebrew prophets' thunderous condemnations of those who oppress the poor. They have heard the Sermon on the Mount. They have prayed for peace. I want to ask, in this chapter: what does faith actually require of us, in this moment? Not what it permits. What it requires.

The prophetic tradition

The Hebrew prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah — were among the most radical social critics in human history. They were consumed with one question: are the powerful treating the vulnerable justly? Amos (5:21-24) delivers God's words to a comfortable, religiously observant people who are simultaneously oppressing the poor: "I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me... But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream." God, in Amos, is explicitly telling his people: your worship means nothing to me while you allow injustice.

Micah (6:8) asks what the Lord requires of us and answers: "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Act justly. Not think justly. Not feel justly. Not pray for justice. Act. Isaiah (1:17) is blunter still: "Seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless." The fatherless — children without protection. Named specifically because they are the most helpless, the most in need of advocates who will stand up when they cannot.

Christian witness

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is perhaps the most powerful example of Christian moral courage in the face of state atrocity. He did not content himself with private prayer while the Nazi state murdered Jewish people. He organized. He protested. He conspired against the murderers. And he paid with his life. He did not think of himself as a martyr. He thought of himself as a Christian trying to do what his faith required. And what his faith required — and what it still requires of those who claim it — was this: not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.

The Christian just war tradition, developed over centuries of moral theology, requires that war be conducted with proportionality and that non-combatants, above all children, be protected. By any reasonable application of that tradition, several of the conflicts currently killing children in the largest numbers fail the test. What does it mean to attend services, to pray, to claim the moral inheritance of one's tradition, while remaining silent about the deaths of children that one's votes and one's silence are helping to sustain?

For secular grandparents

Not every grandparent is religious. But every grandparent has a moral framework built from a lifetime of choices, relationships, and hard-earned wisdom. For the secular grandparent, the imperative is no less clear. If you believe in human rights — in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the Constitution's promise of equal dignity, or simply in the intuition that all human beings are equally worthy of care — then children dying of malnutrition because food is being weaponized are a direct challenge to your deepest beliefs. Secular philosophy gives the same answer religion does: silence in the face of preventable harm is moral failure.

Moral courage in late life

There is a particular form of moral courage available only in late life: the courage that comes from having nothing left to prove. Young people who protest risk their careers, social standing, and relationships. Old people who speak up risk much less. And yet old people often speak up less, not more.

The habits of a lifetime — the instinct that kept the peace at the company meeting, navigated political landmines, and smoothed

over family tensions at Thanksgiving — these habits do not automatically dissolve at retirement. They persist.

I am asking us to choose, in this late chapter of our lives, a different habit. The habit of speaking. The habit of naming what we see. The habit of refusing to let the deaths of children be normalized in our presence. Bonhoeffer was thirty-nine when he was executed. He did not have the luxury of late life. We do. Let us not waste it.

Speaking Across the Divide

How to talk to neighbors, family, and friends who disagree

> *"You may never know what results come of your actions. But if you do nothing, there will be no result." — Mahatma Gandhi*

I know the objection. "I've tried talking to my neighbor about this, and it turned into an argument that damaged our friendship." "I raised the topic at a family dinner, and my son-in-law walked out." These are real experiences. The polarization of our moment is real. The identity-protection mechanisms I described in Chapter Four are real. Speaking up carries genuine social costs. But there is a critical difference between speaking in a way that produces

productive moral conversation and speaking in a way that triggers defensiveness and closes people down.

Start with what we share

The single most important rule for speaking across a political divide about children is this: start with what you share, not with what divides you. Almost everyone, across the political spectrum, believes that children are precious. Almost everyone with grandchildren can access the feeling of love for a specific child that makes the death of any child feel wrong. Start there. Do not start with the political figure. Do not start with the ideology. Start with the child.

"I've been thinking about something that's been keeping me up at night. I think about our grandchildren, and then I read about what's happening to children in Gaza [or Sudan, or Ukraine] — children the same age as our grandchildren — and I can't reconcile those two things. Can I tell you what I've been reading?" That is a very different opening than naming a political villain. One opens a heart. The other closes it.

Ask questions, don't deliver verdicts

People change their minds through questions, not through arguments. An argument triggers defense. A question invites reflection.

Instead of: "How can you support someone who is killing children?"

Try: "I've been reading about the children who've died in Gaza — over 20,000 of them. How do you think about that? Does it trouble you?"

The question does what the verdict cannot do. It acknowledges the other person has a perspective worth hearing. It opens a space for them to voice their own private unease. And it models the intellectual humility that is genuinely appropriate when facing moral complexity.

Acknowledge their fears

Most support for leaders who cause children's deaths is rooted in fear — fear of terrorism, fear of national humiliation, fear of chaos. These fears are real, even when political leaders cynically manipulate them. Before you challenge someone's support, acknowledge the fear that underlies it. "I understand the threat of

terrorism is real." "I understand Russian aggression is real." Acknowledging fear does not mean agreeing that it justifies the response. It means recognizing the person in front of you as a full human being with real anxieties — not a monster, not a fool. Then: "But here is what I keep coming back to: the children. The ones being killed. The ones starving. I find I can't make their deaths add up to any equation that produces a good result. Can you help me understand how you think about them?"

Give people a way out without humiliation

One of the most important arts of moral conversation is giving people a way to change their minds without admitting they were wrong. People can accept new information if they can say "I didn't know that" rather than "I was wrong to support him." Offer the new frame: circumstances have changed, new evidence has emerged, and experts we both respect have raised serious questions. This is not dishonesty. It is compassion. The people who have been able to genuinely change their views on complex issues are almost always the ones who were offered a story in which they were misled — not the ones who were shamed into admitting they were monsters.

Small groups, over time

Change rarely happens in one conversation. It happens in the accumulation of small moments — a question here, an article shared there, a prayer that includes the children of conflict zones, a moment of silence at a community meeting for all children killed in warfare.

The most effective thing a grandparent in a retirement community can do is not to win a single argument but to make it impossible for the people around them to pretend the issue does not exist. To make it part of the moral furniture of the place. Start a discussion group. Invite a speaker — a physician who has served with Médecins Sans Frontières, a professor of international humanitarian law, a local refugee who has fled one of these conflicts. Write an op-ed for the community newsletter. Ask the chaplain to include a prayer for children in conflict zones. Not to convert everyone at once. To ensure that no one can sit in your community and be entirely comfortable in their indifference.

What We Can Do

Practical actions for grandparents and great-grandparents

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do." — Edward Everett Hale

Moral clarity without practical action becomes its own kind of indifference — the indifference of the perpetually troubled who never trouble themselves to act. This chapter is about what we can actually do. I acknowledge that many residents of continuing care communities have real physical limitations. This chapter is organized to be useful for everyone, regardless of physical ability.

Actions you can do from your chair

Write letters. The single most powerful political act available to any American citizen — more powerful, per unit of effort, than almost anything else — is a personal letter to an elected official. Not an email. A letter, handwritten or typed on paper, expressing your personal view in your own words. Congressional offices track these. Staff read them. They are aggregated and reported to the member of Congress. A hundred personal letters on the same subject from constituents will receive a meeting. A thousand will change a vote. Write to your Senators and your Representative. Say what you are: a grandparent or great-grandparent who has raised children and knows what children's lives are worth. Say

what you want: a foreign policy that does not subsidize the deaths of children.

Donate. UNICEF, Save the Children, Médecins Sans Frontières, the International Rescue Committee, and UNRWA all do direct life-saving work for children in conflict zones. Even small donations, from many people, add up to the trucks of therapeutic food, the medical kits, and the trauma counselors that make the difference between life and death for specific children.

Read and share. Read the reports from UNICEF and Save the Children. Not just headlines — the actual reports. UNICEF publishes detailed situation reports for every major crisis at unicef.org. Share them with your community email list. Post them to your community listserv. Forward them to family members.

Speak at community meetings. Ask to have five minutes at the next community meeting. Bring one fact. Tell one story. Ask one question. Then sit down. You don't need to win the argument. You need to put the question in the room.

Actions you can do with others

Start a discussion group. Propose a monthly "Moral Conversation" group — not a political debate, but a small gathering of people

willing to talk about hard ethical questions. Use this book as a starting text, or use UNICEF reports, or streaming documentaries about children in conflict. The chaplain or rabbi or minister at your community may be a natural partner.

Invite speakers. Contact your local university's international relations or human rights department. Ask if a faculty member would speak to your group. Contact a local chapter of Amnesty International or the American Friends Service Committee. Most organizations are eager to speak with you and will come to you.

Write a community statement. Collaborate with your community council or board to adopt a statement — modest and nonpartisan in its language — expressing the community's commitment to protecting children in conflict zones. Frame it around shared values: "Our community believes that no child should be deliberately harmed in warfare." Start with that.

Support local refugee families. Many American cities have significant refugee communities — families who have fled the very conflicts we are discussing. Connecting with local refugee support organizations (HIAS, the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities) to offer whatever

support your community can provide is a direct, human-scale response to a global crisis.

Vote as if children's lives depend on it

They do.

American foreign policy — the weapons we sell, the diplomatic cover we provide, the aid we give or withhold — has direct, documented effects on the survival or death of children in multiple conflicts around the world. Voting, and making your reasons for voting known, is among the most direct available mechanisms for changing those policies. When you vote, tell people why. Tell your children. Tell your grandchildren. Tell your neighbors. Say: I am voting with the children of the world in mind. I am voting as a great-grandparent who cannot be silent about what is being done to children with American support. That message, multiplied across the grandparents and great-grandparents of America, is not a small thing.

A Promise to the Children

> *"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." — Martin Luther King Jr.*

We began this book with a count: six children, six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren. Yours may be a different number. But the feeling is, I suspect, the same — the overwhelming love, the fierce protectiveness, the way a child's face in your memory can stop your heart.

I have asked you, throughout this book, to extend that feeling beyond the children who share your DNA. To feel, even briefly and imperfectly, what you would feel if the child dying of malnutrition in Sudan were your great-grandchild. If the baby killed in Gaza had your grandchild's eyes. If the student buried under the rubble of a Ukrainian school had come home from school to your house.

I know this is hard. I know the distance is real — geographic, cultural, linguistic. I know we cannot feel everything with equal intensity, and that it is not a moral failing to love our own more than strangers. But I also know this: indifference is a choice. Silence is a choice. Looking away is a choice. And choices have consequences — not only for the children who die while we are choosing, but for us, for who we are, for what we will say at the end of our lives when we look back at this moment.

We are living through one of the great moral crises in the history of human civilization. Not because cruelty is new — it is as old as

our species. But because we have, for the first time in history, the technology to know what is happening to children everywhere in the world, in real time, with documentary evidence. We cannot claim we did not know. We can only choose whether knowing leads to action or to managed, comfortable forgetting.

History will not remember us kindly for the managed forgetting. It never does. The grandparents of Germany in the 1930s — most of whom were, individually, decent people who loved their own grandchildren — are not remembered kindly. The bystanders of every historical atrocity are not remembered kindly. History remembers the Bonhoeffers, the Wiesels, the people who looked directly at the evil and refused to be silent.

We have the opportunity, right now, in this late chapter of our lives, to be those people. Not dramatically. Not at great cost. But consistently, persistently, lovingly, and with the full moral authority of a lifetime spent caring for children.

That is not a small promise. It will cost you something — some social comfort, some ease at the dinner table, some undisturbed sleep. But it is a promise that will make you, in the deepest sense, the person you have always been trying to be. It is the promise that, in the end, makes a life a legacy worth leaving.

Silence Is Not Neutral: An Invitation to Speak Together

We have walked a long road together in these pages.

We have looked at numbers that are almost unbearable. We have sat with stories of children whose lives were shattered by bombs, starvation, and fear. We have explored the psychology of how decent people become bystanders, and we have recalled the fierce voices of prophets, philosophers, and survivors who warned us that indifference is the true ally of evil.

If there is one conviction that has emerged clearly, it is this: **silence is not neutral**.

To say nothing when children are harmed is not to stand aside; it is to lean, however slightly, toward the harm. It is to lend our good names, our votes, our tax dollars, and our moral reputations to those who pull triggers or sign orders in comfort, far from the children they are putting in the grave.

The question, then, is not whether we will speak. The only question is how.

Why we must not speak alone

Many grandparents and great-grandparents feel isolated in their concern. When they read a headline about Gaza, Sudan, or Ukraine, they feel sick, then look around the dining room and see everyone else eating peacefully. They conclude that they must be overreacting, that there is nothing to be done, or that no one wants to hear about it.

This book has tried to show that this is often an illusion.

Pluralistic ignorance means that many of your neighbors are feeling something similar and saying nothing for exactly the same reason you are saying nothing. The silence in the room is not proof of comfort. It is proof of shared fear.

The antidote to this is not heroic individual speech, shouted into the wind. It is **collective moral conversation** — a place where you can discover you are not alone, where your questions and grief and anger can be met by others who also refuse to accept that the deaths of children are an acceptable price of politics.

That is why I want to end this book with a very specific, very practical invitation.

A global living room: CivicGood

There is now an online gathering place where people from anywhere in the world can come together to discuss the common good, especially to speak up for children: the **CivicGood** community on Groups.io.

CivicGood is an ad-free, email-based discussion group and web forum, hosted on the modern listserv platform at groups.io (https://groups.io/). It exists for one core purpose: to give ordinary people — including grandparents and great-grandparents — a place to share:

- Their concerns about children in danger
- Their ideas for advocacy and action
- Their moral reflections and spiritual questions
- Their practical plans for making a difference in their own communities

You do not need to be a technology expert. If you can read and send email, you can participate.

How to join CivicGood

Joining an open, public Groups.io community is straightforward.

Here is the simplest path:

1. **Open the CivicGood page**
   - On your computer or tablet, open your web browser (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, etc.).
   - Type or paste this address into the bar at the top: https://groups.io/g/CivicGood
   - Press Enter. You should see the CivicGood home page.
2. **Click "Join This Group"**
   - On the group page, look for a blue button that says something like "Join This Group" or "Apply For Membership in This Group."
   - Click that button.
3. **Enter your email address**
   - Groups.io will ask for the email address you want to use. This becomes your group identity.
   - Enter the same email address you usually use and follow the instructions.
4. **Confirm your email**
   - Check your email inbox for a message from Groups.io.

- If you do not see it, check your spam or junk folder; sometimes new messages land there.
- Open the message and click the confirmation link inside.

5. **Introduce yourself (optional but powerful)**
   - Once you are approved and subscribed, you can write a short message to the group:
   - Who you are
   - Why you care about children
   - What you hope to talk about or learn

Even a few sentences — "I am a great-grandparent in Pennsylvania who cannot accept the killing and starving of children" — can be a powerful act of witness.

From then on, you can participate in two simple ways:

- **By email** — When you receive a message from CivicGood, hit "Reply" to join the conversation, or send a new email to the group's address (listed in the welcome message).
- **On the web** — You can go back to https://groups.io/g/CivicGood to read archives, browse topics, and post from the website.

What CivicGood is for — and not for

CivicGood is not a place for scoring partisan points. It is not a place for shouting, trolling, or trying to "own" people who disagree with you. There are already too many venues for that.

CivicGood is meant to function as a **moral commons** — a shared space where people who may disagree on many things can agree on one: **that children must not be harmed, and that silence in the face of their suffering is unacceptable.**

Some of the conversations you may find or start there:

- How do we talk with family who support leaders responsible for children's deaths?
- What policies could realistically reduce harm to children in conflict zones?
- Which organizations have the best track record of actually getting food and medicine to children?
- How can seniors and people in continuing care communities be effective advocates?
- How do our faith traditions speak to this moment — and how can we embody that teaching? You do not have to arrive with

answers. You only have to arrive with **honest questions and a willingness to listen**.

Why joining matters

You might ask: does joining one small email group really matter, when bombs are falling, and children are starving?

It matters for at least three reasons.

1. **Moral clarity is contagious.** When one grandparent speaks clearly about children in danger, others find the courage to do the same. A group like CivicGood becomes a "practice field" for that clarity — a place to try out words, share experiences, and discover you are not alone.
2. **Ideas travel.** Practical suggestions born in a small group — sample letters, community resolutions, local actions — can be adopted and adapted by others around the country and the world. You may share something simple that becomes a model far beyond your own circle.
3. **History is written by those who show up.** Historians looking back at this era will ask: Where were the citizens? Where were the elders? Were there communities that refused to be silent? Joining CivicGood is one small way of ensuring

that the answer is yes — there were people who spoke, and we know where to find their words.

A final personal word

I have dedicated much of my life raising children, loving grandchildren, and now watching great-grandchildren take their first steps into a world that often seems bent on destroying its young. I have also spent part of my life in civic and community work, and I know one thing beyond doubt: **most change begins when a few people decide to talk seriously together about what is wrong and what must be done.**

CivicGood can be such a starting place for our generation.

So this is my invitation to you, wherever you are reading these words:

- If something in this book has unsettled you,
- If you feel the weight of the children's suffering,
- If you want to move from private grief to shared resolve,

then please, when you finish this page, open your browser or ask someone you trust for help, and visit:

https://groups.io/g/CivicGood

Click **"Join This Group."** Add your voice to a growing chorus of grandparents, great-grandparents, parents, and younger people who refuse to treat children's suffering as background noise.

You may never know exactly what difference your participation makes. But you can be certain of this: **if you join and speak, you will not be neutral. You will have chosen the children's side.**

And in the end, that is the side I intend to be on when my great-grandchildren ask me, someday, "What did you do, when children were being hurt?"

I hope you will be able to say: *I spoke. I listened. I joined with others. I refused to let my silence be part of the harm.*

— — —

This book is dedicated to the public domain for non-commercial educational use. Archived permanently at archive.org for public access.

The children are not our children to keep. They are our children to free.